



# LEWIS & CLARK CITY-COUNTY Health Department

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## Lead Education and Abatement Program

### Are Children at Risk of Lead Poisoning in Your Home?

Lead poisoning is one of the most serious health threats to children in the home -- in part because it's so easy to overlook the damage it does. Even small quantities can cause learning and behavioral problems, as well as brain and hearing damage.

Here are several questions that can help you determine if children may be at risk for lead poisoning in your home:

- Do you live in an older home? Many older homes have lead-based paint or lead water pipes. Lead paint was banned in 1978. Homes built before 1950 are most likely to have lead in paint and water pipes.
- Is there cracking, chipping, or flaking paint in your home?
- Are there places where paint is being rubbed, such as on a door or in a window frame? This can make dust that has lead in it.
- Do you have water pipes made with lead or joined with lead solder? Water that flows through them may contain lead. Lead pipes are dull gray and scratch easily with a key or penny.
- Has your home been recently remodeled or renovated? Projects may leave dust or paint chips with lead.
- Is there lead in the soil outside your home? It may have come from exterior paint, prior smelter emissions, floodwaters, or car exhaust from the days when gasoline contained lead. Children can be poisoned if they play in soil that has lead in it or if someone tracks the soil inside the home.
- Does someone you live with work where lead is used? Some jobs that might create lead dust are construction, bridge building, sandblasting, plumbing, battery making and recycling, car repair, furniture refinishing, and foundry casting. Workers can bring lead dust home on clothing, skin, or shoes.
- Do you have children under age 6 who have not had a blood test for lead? Young children should be tested for lead. This is especially true if you live in an older home, if your home has recently been remodeled, or if a brother, sister, or playmate has high lead levels. Children should be tested around 6 months of age and then every year until age 6.

The East Helena Lead Education and Abatement Program (LEAP) works to prevent exposure to lead and to educate people about safe strategies for living around it. We offer free blood lead screenings and free home environmental assessments, including sampling of yard soil, interior dust, drinking water, and lead-based paint in order to identify potential sources of and pathways for lead exposure.

If you are moving to the East Helena area, or if you already live here, we can tell you if your yard soil has already been tested or replaced. If it hasn't, we can tell you if your yard qualifies for remediation.

Please call Debb or Jan at the LEAP office, 457-8583, for more information or to schedule a free environmental assessment and/or blood lead screening.